

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 05497 260655Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 260617Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9992

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 5497

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, MOPS, SOPN, EAID, MASS, CB, US

SUBJ: THE KHMERS ARE IMMOBILIZED AS THEY AWAIT OUTCOME IN US
CONGRESS AND DECISION BY THE MARSHAL ON WHETHER OR NOT TO
DEPART.

1. WE SENSE THAT A MOOD COMBINING FATALISM AND IMMOBILITY IS
NOW PERVADING BOTH CIVIL AND MILITARY SEGMENTS OF KHMER SOCIETY ON
THE REPUBLIC SIDE, WHICH HELPS ACCOUNT FOR THE LACK OF AGGRESSIVE-
NESS BY FANK AND THE WIDESPREAD SPIRIT OF APATHY AND RESIGNATION
DISPLAYED BY THE PUBLIC AT LARGE IN THE FACE OF THE ROCKETING AND
STRANGLING OF THE CITY BY THE KC.

2. WHILE THESE REACTIONS MIGHT BE DEEMED CHARACTERISTIC OF LA
BUDDHIST CULTURE, TO WHICH THE KHMERS DEFINITELY BELONG, WE BE-
LIEVE THERE ARE TWO MAJOR EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH UNDEFLIE THIS
MOOD. ONE IS THE PROLONGED DELAY BY THE U.S. CONGRESS IN COMING
TO A DEFINITIVE DECISION ABOUT ADDITIONAL AID TO THE
KHMER REPUBLIC. THE KHMERS ARE GENERALLY AWARE OF THE TENOR OF
THE DEBATE OVER HTIS QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES EVEN
THOUGH THEY MAY NOT KNOW ALL THE DETAILS. THEY SENSE
THAT THERE IS A STRONG CURRENT OF OPINION WHICH FAVORS
ABANDONING THE REPUBLICAN SIDE TO WHATEVER FATE LIES IN
STORE FOR IT BY CUTTING OFF FURTHER SUPPLIES OF MILITARY
AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES (THE KHMERS REALIZE, EVEN IF SOME
CONGRESSMEN DO NOT, THAT DENIAL OF EITHER FORM OF AID
WOULD BE AS FATAL AS THE DENIAL OF BOTH AT ONCE). THE
KHMERS FEEL (COORECTLY) POWERLESS TO AFFECT THE OUTCOME
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IN THE U.S. CONGRESS, AND THEIR EXTREMELY FATALISTIC

REACTION THEREFORE APPEARS FULLY JUSTIFIED BY THE REALITIES OF THEIR SITUATION. AS FOR THE FANK, ONE CAN HARDLY BLAME A SOLDIER FOR NOT WISHING TO EXPOSE HIMSELF TO DANGER WHEN HE IS AWARE THAT AMMUNITION ISSUES ARE LIKELY TO CEASE ENTIRELY WITHIN A FEW WEEKS ANYWAY AND HE WILL THEN HAVE TO STOP FIGHTING REGARDLESS.

3. THE OTHER MAJOR CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IS THE PROLONGED STRUGGLE BEING WAGED BEHIND THE SCENES OVER WHETHER THE MARSHAL SHOULD STEP DOWN FROM HIS LEADERSHIP POSITION AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY. OBVIOUSLY THE PUBLIC IS NOT AWARE OF ALL THE INTRICACIES OF THIS MANEUVERING, BUT THERE IS CLEARLY A GENERAL AWARENESS THAT THE MARSHAL MAY BE ON THE VERGE OF TAKING HIMSELF OUT OF THE PICTURE. THIS PROSPECT GIVES THE ORDINARY PEOPLE AND THE SOLDIERS ON THIS SIDE THE HOPE THAT A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT MAY NOT BE TOO FAR DISTANT, FOR THE MARSHAL'S DEPARTURE MIGHT OPEN THE WAY-- AT LEAST TO THOSE INCLINED TOWARD OPTIMISM -- FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OTHER SIDE. AGAIN THE ORDINARY KHMERS FEEL POWERLESS TO AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE DEBATE OVER THE MARSHAL'S POSITION, AND THEY AWAIT THE OUTCOME WITH THE SAME FATALISM AND IMMOBILITY WITH WHICH THEY REGARD THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS. THE FANK SOLDIER WOULD NOT BE INCLINED TO CHARGE INTO COMBAT WHEN AN END TO THE FIGHTING MAY BECOME THE PLATFORM OF THE NEW KHMER LEADERSHIP.

4. PREDICTIONS ARE HAZARDOUS, BUT OUR GUESS WOULD BE THAT IF THE MARSHAL DOES DEPART, AND IF THE CONGRESS DECIDES TO VOTE CONTINUED SUPPORT TO THE GKR TO GIVE IT A CHANCE TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION WITH THE OTHER SIDE, THE MORALE OF BOTH THE MILITARY AND THE CIVILIANS ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE WOULD RECEIVE A MAJOR BOOST, WHICH COULD BE JUST WHAT IS NEEDED TO RESTORE FANK'S SELF-CONFIDENCE. BUT AT THE MOMENT -- AND FOR AS LONG AS THESE TWO ISSUES ARE NOT DEFINITELY RESOLVED -- WE CAN EXPECT CONTINUED IMMOBILITY AND APATHY PERVAIDING MOST PEOPLE ON THE GKR SIDE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PHNOM05497
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750105-0799
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750313/aaaaalvb.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <10 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE KHMERS ARE IMMOBILIZED AS THEY AWAIT OUTCOME IN US CONGRESS AND DECISION BY THE MARSHAL ON WHETHER OR NOT TO
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, MOPS, SOPN, EAID, MASS, CB, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006